

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## House Democrats

James A. Amann  
*Speaker of the House*



Christopher Donovan  
*House Majority Leader*

February 17, 2006

## **BREAKING GROUND IN 2006**

### **House Democrats to focus on Healthcare, Children, Jobs & Tax Relief**

Building upon last year's *Blueprint* for Connecticut, the 99-member House Democratic caucus is *Breaking Ground in 2006* with a focus on healthcare, children, jobs, and tax relief. Speaker of the House Jim Amann (D-Milford) and House Majority Leader Chris Donovan (D-Meriden) outlined the priorities at a State Capitol news conference saying that it is important to take a proactive approach to each of these issues while state finances are healthy.

"With the state budget in pretty good shape, we have an opportunity to show some real vision and invest in the long term," Amann said. "Access to healthcare, our children's future, a better climate for economic growth and giving a break to taxpayers are the goals we have set our sights on."

The 2006 session of the Connecticut General Assembly convened last week for a short 12 week session and committees are now beginning to shape legislation that will reflect the Democrats' goals.

"Our goal is to make progress and move forward," Donovan said. "The actions we take in this session will make a difference in people's lives around the state. We have set the bar high and we expect to clear it. Whether we are talking about jobs, transportation or healthcare for children, House Democrats will be working on issues that are vital to Connecticut's future."

A wide ranging approach to improving the future of Connecticut's children will be sought, including additional resources for pre-school and after school programs, and healthcare coverage for more children. With the latest state surplus estimates topping \$660 million, House Democrats believe 2006 presents a rare opportunity to invest in the future and save money in the long term.

“Wise management of our budget surplus will enable us to reach our legislative goals this year that include improving the lives of children, providing responsible tax relief and energizing economic development,” said Rep. Denise Merrill (D-Mansfield/Storrs), House Chair of the Legislature’s Appropriations Committee. “In addition, we have an opportunity to be fiscally prudent by paying down some state debt.”

Lowering the state tax liability for both businesses and residents will receive the bulk of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee’s attention. Achieving economic growth through job creation will be the litmus test for assessing business tax adjustments, while residents will see a continued commitment to property tax relief.

“We must continuously seek ways to help businesses stay and grow in Connecticut,” said Rep. Cam Staples (D-New Haven), House Chair of the Legislature’s Finance Committee. “This year presents the opportunity to lower the tax burden on both residents and business, and in the long term that will help us achieve many of our goals.”

Funding the 2003 Transportation Strategy Board’s myriad of highway and mass transit projects along, and extending from, Interstates 95, 91, 84 and 395 corridors was also touted as a key part of the job creation equation. Encouraging economic growth by addressing rising energy costs and offering targeted business tax credits will be pursued as well.

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